

# 중독적 구매행동과 정서와의 관계연구

Addictive Buying Behavior: Exploring Its Relations to Affect

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〈Abstract〉

본 연구에서는 중독적 구매행동과 정서(Affect)와의 인과관계를 알아보고, 중독적 구매자의 경우 기분 전환(mood elevator)을 위하여 구매행동을 하는 것인지를 조사하였다. 연구자료는 설문지조사에 의하여 149명의 피험자(대학생, 사카고 거주자, Debtors Anonymous회원)로부터 얻어졌다. 중독적 구매행동이 우울증과 낮은 자아존중감을 야기시킬 가능성이 역방향으로 우울증과 낮은 자아존중감이 중독적 구매행동을 야기시킬 가능성보다 높은 것으로 나타났다.

중독적 구매자는 비중독적 구매자보다 자신에 대하여 부정적 감정을 더 많이 가지고 있었으며(불행한, 우울한, 불만족한, 지루한), 쇼핑하는동안에는 더 흥분되며 우울하고, 쇼핑후에는 더 우울하고 자신감이 더 적어지는 것으로 나타났다. 이러한 결과는 중독적 구매자가 기분전환 (mood elevator)을 위하여 구매행동을 할 것이라는 가정을 지지하지 않았다.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a growing interest

in the phenomenon of addictive buying. Whether this interest is a reflection of a general concern about spending in both the private and public sectors of

society is not clear, but it has been the subject of both increased research (d'Astous, 1990; Faber & O'Guinn, 1988; Scherhorn, 1990) and discussion in the popular press (Chernoff, 1991; Elias, 1985; Hellmich, 1986; Howard, 1987; Meyer, 1987; Saltzman, 1988).

Addictive buying may be more widespread than is commonly imagined. Waddell (1989) mentioned that about six to ten percent of the American population spend compulsively and Song (1993) stated that four percent of the Korean do the same behavior, showing that it is not restricted to a small portion of society.

Although previous studies have examined the relationships between addictive buying and other explanatory variables such as materialism, self-esteem, anxiety, and depression, little research has investigated their causality. Most studies suggested that people engaged in addictive buying in order to suppress or lessen negative feelings, to look for excitement, or to seek immediate gratification (Arenson, 1991; Valence, d'Astous, & Fortier, 1988). In short, addictive buyers use shopping as a mood elevator experience. However, a few studies showed that addictive buyers felt guilty, depressed, and fearful after purchases.

Because addictive buying is not limited to a few people and because it can cause severe problems in individuals and households, it would be beneficial to examine the causality of addictive buying behavior and affect. Further, to better understand addictive buying behavior might provide a basis to suggesting ways to overcome or control such behavior. The purpose of this study is to examine whether demographic characteristics influence addictive buying behavior, which direction of causality is better for explaining addictive buying behavior and affect, and whether shopping acts as a mood elevator for addictive buyers.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### Self-esteem and Addictive Buying

How can people bolster their self-esteem? People communicate not only verbally but also non-verbally through material goods which they have purchased. Purchase of the desired goods results in good reactions of others and the enhancement of self-esteem can be facilitated through this process (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967). Therefore, consumption of goods may be used by some individuals to enhance self-esteem.

Krueger (1988) mentioned that addictive buyers were people "who are very conscious of how they look and appear to others, who attempt to be pleasing to others, and their fragile esteem and sense of self depend on the responses of others" (p.575). In a survey of the literature on self-esteem, Jones (1973) hypothesized that low self-esteem individuals would have more need to enhance their esteem than those with high levels of self-esteem. Also, Faber, O'Guinn, and Krych (1987) stated that people with low self-esteem were easily stimulated to spend by advertising and the mass media. d'Astous (1990) supported these statements with findings that addictive buyers were more likely to have low self-esteem; and, addictive buyers were more easily persuaded by salespersons. These studies seem to indicate that persons with low self-esteem may purchase in order to enhance their self-esteem.

Recent research demonstrated the relationship between self-esteem and addictive buying. Faber and O'Guinn (1989) and O'Guinn and Faber (1989) compared "normal" and addictive buyers. They found that addictive buyers had low scores on self-esteem than "normal consumers." This study also revealed the provocative finding that addictive buyers did not score significantly higher on possessiveness subscale (Belk, 1984 & 1985) than "normal consumers" although

addictive buyers did have higher scores on envy and non-generosity subscales.

Based on the results of interviews, Faber et al. (1987) suggested that addictive buyers were more likely to have low self-esteem, to increase their self-esteem through purchasing, and to buy gifts for others in an attempt to build good relationships. d'Astous (1990) investigated the addictive buying tendencies for "normal" consumers. He found that people who had strong tendencies for addictive buying had lower self-esteem scores and were more likely to abuse credit cards. Song (1993) examined the addictive buying tendencies of general consumers in Korea. She assumed that people buy something for a compensatory purpose when they have low self-esteem or feel inner-emptiness. She found that low self-esteem was related with addictive buying tendencies. However, all studies mentioned above have not investigated the causality but the relationship between low self-esteem and addictive buying behavior.

### Depression and Addictive Buying

Because of the lack of clarity regarding the causal or consequential relationship between depression and addictive buying, this study will discuss both relationships. The following studies show that depression is related to some types of addictive behavior (or buying), but they do not show whether depression is a causal factor in addictive behavior (or buying), or addictive behavior (or buying) is a causal factor in depression.

The relationship between depression and addictive buying has not been investigated to date but some research has shown that other types of addicts are more depressed than are non-addicts. Greden et al. (1978) found that there were positive relationships between depression and caffeine consumption among psychiatric male inpatients. A similar relationship was investigated

in a study by Williams (1966). His results showed that problem drinkers were more depressed than were non-problem drinkers. Nathan's work (1988) supported these findings. Drug and alcohol abusers were characterized as depressed persons in his study. It is important to emphasize that these studies do not demonstrate a causal direction from depression to addictive behavior, but could as easily be interpreted as indicating that knowing one is an addict can make one depressed.

Based on clinical and research experiences, Mackay, Donovan, and Marlatt (1991) suggested that addicts engaged in addictive behavior in order to cope with depression. Moschis and Cox (1989) concluded from literature reviews that addicts were characterized by negative feelings, especially anxiety and depression. In other words, depression is a common characteristic among addicts. Based on literature review, Hirschman (1992) suggested that depression influenced the development of addictive behavior. People who suffer from negative feelings such as depression, can not manage them through "internal means", and turn into "an external substance or behavior" such as drug or shopping.

Though far from sufficient to suggest that depression is related to addictive buying, research conducted by Faber, O'Guinn, and Krych (1987), d'Astous (1990), and Valence, d'Astous, and Fortier (1988) suggested that addictive buyers were more anxious or depressed than general consumers and they purchased things in order to alleviate stress, depression, or anxiety. Marks (1990) suggested that addictive buying might be stimulated by depression and that addictive buyers were prone to engage in addictive buying when they were depressed. Arenson (1991) noted that addictive buyers spent money as a temporary and instant relief of stress or negative feelings, such as depression even though spending was an inadequate mechanism of coping with these problems. Further, Scherhorn, Reisch and Raab

(1990) found that addictive buyers had severe depressive tendencies. Therefore, it is not inconceivable that addictive buyers may spend money in an attempt to cope with their depression.

Many addictive buyers try to enhance their level of self-esteem or to relieve depression through purchasing but it often results in a negative consequence, such as guilt, depression, or remorse (d'Astous, 1990; d'Astous, Maltais & Roberge, 1990; Glatt & Cook, 1987; O'Guinn & Faber, 1989). In Faber and O'Guinn's (1988) study, 36.4 percent of addictive buyers who were interviewed mentioned postpurchase guilt, anxiety, or fear. This postpurchase depression was also found in Friese's study (1992). Forty three percent of addictive buyers stated that they felt guilty and/or depressed after shopping. Again, it is quite possible that addictive buying can cause depression and that addictive low self-esteem.

### III. PROCEDURE

#### Selection of the Sample

The sample consisted of members of Debtor Anonymous in Chicago, general consumers living in Chicago, and college students enrolled in a large mid-west university.

#### Administration Of the Questionnaire

The instruments contained in a questionnaire packet included a cover letter an addressed, stamped envelope. They had been distributed to the members of Debtor Anonymous who were present at a self-help group meeting and to the students in classes from May 1993 to July 1993. The names and addresses of general consumers were randomly sampled from the Chicago Telephone Directory. For the general consumer sample, the same instruments were mailed to them in May

1993. A questionnaire-survey approach was chosen because it was an appropriate means for assuring the anonymity of the respondents, reducing socially desirable responses.

#### Definition of Terms

**Addictive buying:** an uncontrollable urge to buy which is impelled by psychological tension arising from internal factors and which is accompanied by a feeling of relief along with the frustration caused by the addictive nature of the behavior (d'Astous, 1990, p. 16).

**Self-esteem:** an attitude toward the self (Rosenberg, 1989, p.30).

**Depression:** sad or negative mood, feeling, or emotion.

#### The Measures Used

**Addictive buying.** Addictive buying was assessed with the Compulsive Buying Scales developed by Valence et al. (1988) and Faber and O'Guinn (1992). In addition, six questions about feelings before and after addictive buying were included in order to investigate which direction of causality (feelings of depression and low self-esteem causing a need to buy a lot, or buying a lot causing feelings of depression and low self-esteem) is better for explaining affect and addictive buying behavior (see Table 3).

**Questions about feeling.** Questions which ask respondents' feeling about oneself, during and after shopping were also included in the questionnaire (see Table 4, 5, and 6).

**Demographic Questions.** Questions related to the individual's demographic status were included in the questionnaire.

## Analysis of Data

Paired t-tests were used to test which direction of causality is better for explaining addictive buying behavior and affect. Further, the sample were divided into two groups. One group who had higher scores than the median of addictive buying scores was called as addictive buyers while the other who had lower scores than the median was called as non-addictive buyers (median score = 51).

T-tests and repeated measure analyses of variance were used to test whether shopping acts as a mood elevator for addictive buyers. In these analyses, the median split of the addictive buying scale was used. Also, the level of significance for rejection of the null hypothesis was set at  $p < 0.1$  because this was an explanatory study. In further analyses, six feelings (good, satisfied, proud, happy, depressed, excited) were combined into three ones (self-evaluation, mood, excitement) because that would make it easier to understand the relationships among feelings and addictive buying behavior. Also, these feelings were investigated in order to find out the differences across situations (in general, while shopping, after shopping) and groups (addictive buyers vs. nonaddictive buyers).

## IV. RESULTS

### Sample Description

Questionnaire were distributed to 664 people and the response rate was approximately 27% (85% for the student sample, 12% for the general consumer sample, 16% for the Debtors Anonymous member sample). From the 170 returned questionnaires, 149 were used for the study because many questions were not answered. The analysis combined three sources of subject recruitment. The three sources of respondents were

89 college students,

40 general consumers living in Chicago, and

20 members of Debtors Anonymous.

Table 1 lists the frequencies of the demographic characteristics. Women constituted 60% of the sample. The median age of respondents was 23 years and 69% were single primarily because 60% of them were students.

Table 2 presents the mean differences in addictive buying among the three groups (students, general consumers, members of Debtors Anonymous). The results of ANOVA indicated that the members of Debtors Anonymous sample had the highest addictive buying scores.

To determine whether demographic characteristics (e.g., gender, marital status, age, income) influenced addictive buying, t-test, ANOVA, and correlation analyses were used. The results showed that there was a significant difference in the average addictive buying scores between women and men. The mean addictive buying score for women was 54 and for men 49 ( $t = 2.08$ ,  $p = 0.04$ ). Women seem to have greater tendencies toward addictive buying than men. This result is consistent with previous findings (d'Astous, 1990; d'Astous et al., 1990; O'Guinn & Faber, 1989; Scherhorn, 1990).

Although divorced respondents had higher scores on addictive buying than other marital groups (divorced = 59, never married = 52, etc.), the differences were not significant ( $F = 0.92$ ,  $p = 0.47$ ). There was no significant relationship between age and addictive buying ( $r = 0.04$ ,  $p = 0.6$ ). The same result was found by Scherhorn et al. (1990) and Friese (1993). There was no significant relationship between income and addictive buying ( $r = -0.04$ ,  $p = 0.6$ ). This result is consistent with previous findings (d'Astous et al., 1990; Scherhorn et al., 1990; O'Guinn & Faber, 1989)

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics

frequency (%)		frequency (%)	
Gender:		Marital Status:	
Male	89 (40)	Never Married	102 (69)
Female	60 (60)	Separated	4 (3)
Income:		Divorced	8 (5)
Under \$10,000	12 (8)	Widowed	3 (2)
\$10,000 to \$19,999	15 (11)	Married	31 (21)
\$20,000 to \$29,999	18 (12)	Age:	
\$30,000 to \$39,999	14 (10)	15-19:	34 (23)
\$40,000 to \$49,999	15 (11)	20-29:	68 (46)
\$50,000 to \$59,999	12 (8)	30-39:	24 (16)
\$60,000 to \$69,999	11 (8)	40-49:	12 (8)
\$70,000 to \$79,999	10 (7)	50-59:	7 (4)
\$80,000 or Above	36 (25)	60 over:	4 (3)

Table 2. Mean Differences in Addictive buying among Students, General Consumers, &amp; Debtors

	Student	General Consumers	Debtors	F value
Addictive buying	51.0a	45.1b	69.7c	27.8*

General consumers are subjects who are randomly chosen from the Chicago Telephone Directory.

Debtors are subjects who are Debtors Anonymous members living in Chicago.

\* significant at  $p < 0.05$

abc Means with different superscripts differ at  $p < 0.05$ .

### Analysis of Direction of Causality

The results indicated that the likelihood that buying a lot causes feelings of depression and low self-esteem was significantly higher than the likelihood that feelings of depression and low self-esteem causes a need to buy a lot (see Table 3). In the following analyses, the median split of the addictive buying scale was used. When addictive buyers and non-addictive buyers were analyzed separately, only one paired t-test for addictive buyers showed a significant difference -- the likelihood that overbuying causes depression is

significantly higher than the likelihood that depression causes overbuying. These findings are not overwhelmingly strong but they do point to the likelihood that an addictive buyer does not shop in order to reduce depression.

### Mood Elevator Role of Shopping

In the analyses which test whether people, especially addictive buyers, use shopping to reduce negative feelings (bored, depressed) or increase positive feelings (enhanced self-esteem, excitement) and to understand

Table 3. Results of paired t-test for the Direction of Causality

	Mean	t-value
a1. How often depression causes overbuying	2.53	1.81
b1. How often overbuying causes depression	2.39	
a2. Likelihood that depression causes overbuying	4.54	-3.94*
b2. Likelihood that overbuying causes depression	5.25	
a3. Likelihood that low self-esteem causes overbuying	4.03	-2.59*
b3. Likelihood that overbuying causes low self-esteem	4.53	

t-value produced by a paired (question a and b) t-test

\* significant at  $p < 0.05$

Table 4. Feelings about Oneself

	Mean	S.D.	t-value	P-value
Good (vs. bad):				
addictive buyers	4.1	1.1	-3.71	0.001
non-addictive buyers	4.6	0.6		
Satisfied (vs. not satisfied):				
addictive buyers	3.7	1.3	-3.72	0.001
non-addictive buyers	4.4	0.9		
Proud (vs. not proud):				
addictive buyers	3.9	1.2	-3.04	0.003
non-addictive buyers	4.4	0.9		
Happy (vs. unhappy):				
addictive buyers	3.9	1.1	-2.98	0.003
non-addictive buyers	4.4	0.9		
Not depressed (vs. depressed):				
addictive buyers	3.8	1.1	-2.29	0.03
non-addictive buyers	4.2	1.0		
Excited (vs. bored):				
addictive buyers	3.7	1.1	-2.68	0.009
non-addictive buyers	4.2	0.8		

feelings during and after shopping, the median split of the addictive buying scale was used. When describing their general feelings, addictive buyers were found to have less positive attitude about themselves (bad, not satisfied, not proud), to be less excited (bored), and more depressed (unhappy, depressed) than non-addictive buyers. Table 4 presents the results of these t-tests.

When they are shopping, addictive buyers are both more depressed and excited than non-addictive buyers (see Table 5). These results only partially supported by the findings of Faber and O'Guinn (1988) who found that addictive buyers described more often that "shopping was fun" than non-addictive consumers. It would appear that addictive buyers carry some weight of depression which coexists with the excitement of shopping.

There were also significant differences in the feelings of depression and pride after shopping between addictive and non-addictive buyers (see Table 6).

Addictive buyers were more depressed and less proud after shopping than non-addictive buyers. These results were consistent with previous findings (Faber & O'Guinn, 1988; Friese, 1993); addictive buyers were more likely to feel both depressed and guilty after shopping than non-addictive buyers.

In further analyses, the sum of scores of 'good,' 'satisfied,' and 'proud' was named as those of self-evaluation while the sum of scores of 'happy' and 'not-depressed' was named as those of mood. Scores of 'excited' were remained alone. First, these feelings (self-evaluation, mood, and excitement) were investigated in order to find out the differences across three levels (in general, while shopping, after shopping).

Table 5. Feelings during Shopping

	Mean	S.D.	t-value	P-value
Good (vs. bad):				
addictive buyers	3.9	1.0	-0.36	0.72
non-addictive buyers	4.0	0.8		
Satisfied (vs. not satisfied):				
addictive buyers	3.5	1.0	-0.30	0.76
non-addictive buyers	3.6	0.9		
Proud (vs. not proud):				
addictive buyers	3.2	0.9	0.68	0.5
non-addictive buyers	3.3	0.7		
Happy (vs. unhappy):				
addictive buyers	3.8	0.9	0.15	0.88
non-addictive buyers	3.8	0.8		
Not depressed (vs. depressed):				
addictive buyers	3.5	1.2	-2.29	0.03
non-addictive buyers	4.2	1.0		
Excited (vs. bored):				
addictive buyers	3.6	1.0	1.93	0.06
non-addictive buyers	3.2	1.0		



Table 6. Feelings after Shopping

	Mean	S.D.	t-value	p-value
Good (vs. bad): addictive buyers	3.7	1.0	-1.54	0.13
non-addictive buyers	3.9	0.8		
Satisfied (vs. not satisfied): addictive buyers	3.6	1.1	-1.20	0.23
non-addictive buyers	3.7	0.9		
Proud (vs. not proud): addictive buyers	3.2	1.0	-2.38	0.02
non-addictive buyers	3.6	0.8		
Happy (vs. unhappy): addictive buyers	3.7	1.0	-0.72	0.47
non-addictive buyers	3.8	0.9		
Not depressed (vs. depressed): addictive buyers	3.5	1.0	3.25	0.002
non-addictive buyers	4.0	0.9		
Excited (vs. bored): addictive buyers	3.6	0.9	0.48	0.63
non-addictive buyers	3.5	1.0		

Table 7. Means of Feelings across Times and F-values Produced by Repeated Measure Analyses of Variance

	In General	While Shopping	After Shopping	F-value
Self-evaluation	12.50a	10.72b	10.82b	53.54
Mood	8.20a	7.54b	7.30c	25.81
Excitement	3.95a	3.41b	3.57b	17.51

All F-values are significant at  $p < 0.001$ .

abc Means with different superscripts differ at  $p < 0.05$ .

Repeated measure analyses of variance indicated that the respondents evaluated themselves more positively, were in a better mood, and were more excited in general compared to during shopping and after shopping (see Table 7 and Figure 1). Also, they were in a better mood after shopping compared to during shopping. The view of shopping as a mood elevating experience seems to be disconfirmed by these findings.

Perhaps shopping is too much of a “task” to generate positive feelings and self-evaluation.

Second, these feeling were examined in order to be different across groups as well as situations. The results of the analyses indicated that the main effects of level of addictive buying (high vs. low) on self-evaluation and mood were significant at a 0.05 significance level (see Table 8 and Figure 2). In other words, non-

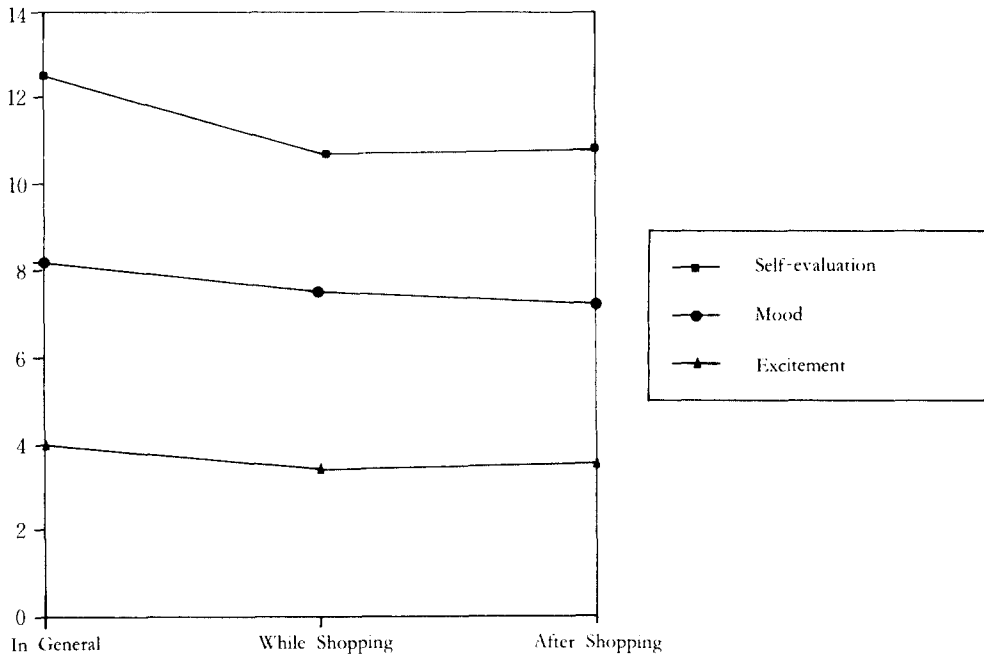


Figure 1. Feelings across Times

Table 8. Means of Feelings across Times and Groups and F-values produced by Repeated Measure Analyses of Variance

Group	Addictive Buyer			Non-addictive Buyer			F-value		
	In General	While Shop	After Shop	In General	While Shop	After Shop	Time	Group	Inter-action
Self-evaluation	11.69AB	10.67AB	10.51B	13.36C	10.77AB	11.16AB	57.29*	6.46*	8.81*
Mood	7.76	7.31	7.01	8.66	7.79	7.61	26.01*	7.31*	1.47
Excitement	3.76A	3.58AB	3.63AB	4.16C	3.21AB	3.51AB	18.97*	0.01	8.69*

\* significant at  $p < 0.05$

ABC Newman-Keuls multiple range test shows that means with different superscripts differ at  $p < 0.05$ .

addictive buyers evaluated themselves more positively and were in a better mood than addictive buyers.

Third, the results indicated that the interaction effects of time and group on self-evaluation and excitement were significant (Figure 2). Although shopping was not a mood elevating experience, the drops of self-

evaluation and excitement from "in general" to "during shopping" were smaller for addictive buyers than for nonaddictive buyers (see results of Newman-Keuls multiple range test in Table 8).

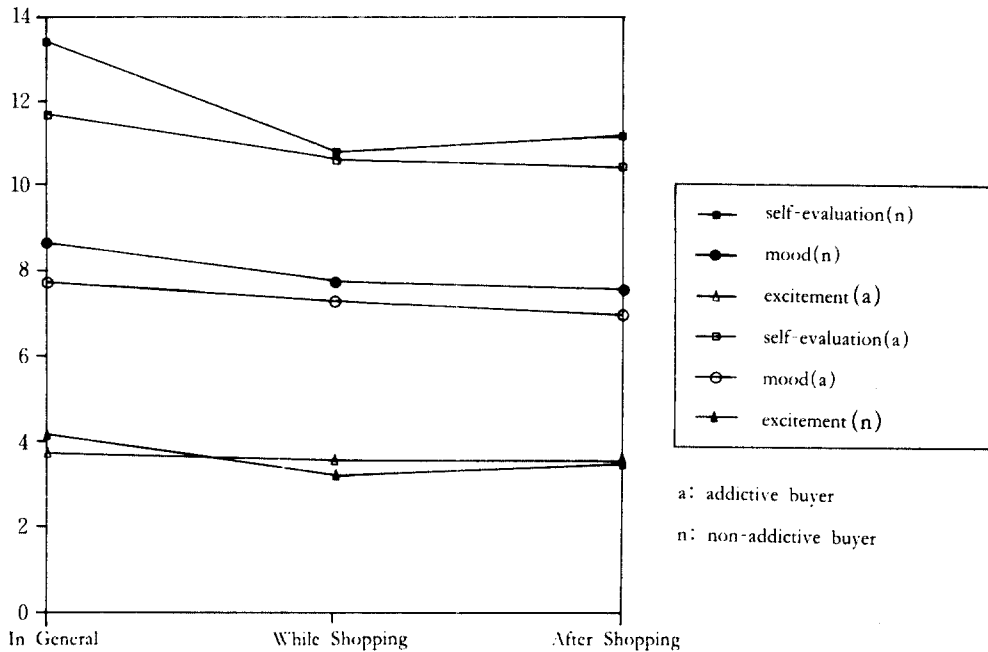


Figure 2. Feelings across Times and Groups

### V. DISCUSSION

The results of the present study showed that respondents felt that overbuying caused feelings of depression and low self-esteem more than depression and low self-esteem causing a need to buy a lot. This result is supported by the findings of Faber and O' Guinn (1988) and Friese (1992) that people feel guilty, depressed, or fearful after addictive buying. These findings may suggest that people feel depressed or have low self-esteem after shopping, although they engage in addictive buying in order to get rid of these negative feelings. Thus, addictive buying is not the solution which addictive buyers seek.

Findings of this study showed that people had more positive feelings in general compared to during and after shopping. These results are not consistent with the assumption that shopping acts as a mood elevator. In other words, people was assumed to engage in

addictive buying in order to change their negative mood, to have positive attitude toward themselves, or to look for the excitement. However, shopping for addictive buyers was less of a mood depressing experience than for nonaddictive buyers. One possible explanation is that people may evaluate themselves or their feelings more positively in general compared to specific times. Another explanation is that some people think of shopping as a chore and/or a time consuming task, while others feel more positive during shopping.

#### Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for Future Research

The limitation is related to the sample and the data. Because of difficulties in identifying addictive buyers and asking for their participation in this study, an appropriate sample size of addictive buyers was difficult to attain. Furthermore, it was not feasible to gather

longitudinal data. Therefore, the following suggestions are made for the future research on addictive buying behavior. First, addictive buyers should be used as subjects for a better understanding of addictive buying behavior. Second, longitudinal data should be helpful to better understand the cause and the effect of addictive buying behavior.

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